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Conference Paper

The Importance of Disseminating Information about JAK's Translation Tenders within the Italian Publishing Scene. Reflective Elements on the Institutional Financial Support for the Translation of Literary Texts

1. A Slow but Steady Upwards Trend

In his analyses of Slovenian literature translations into Italian, which he has been progressively updating every three or four years since 1997, Prof. Miran Košuta (2022) outlines a slow but steady upwards trend in the number of translations. Referring also to Zoltan Jan's (2001) previous work on the same subject, which counts a total of 250 works translated in the period between 1878 and 2000 (less than two per year), he notes a very lukewarm dissemination of Slovenian literature into Italian—a cultural territory that is contiguous but never spiritually fraternal, and, from numerous perspectives, quite the opposite, especially from a publishing standpoint. Interest in prose was scarce, with more focus on poetry, but without a consistent strategy in this regard. There were also few non-regional publishers (i.e., those not based in Friuli-Venezia Giulia): approximately ten in the 19th century, with a hiatus in the 20-year period of Italy's fascist era, followed by a surge in the last decade (1980-1990).

A qualitative leap is observed after Slovene independence in 1991: almost all publishing houses successfully transitioned to an open market economy, and many new publishing houses were established. This, together with the rapid development of digitalisation and printing technology, contributed to an increase in the number of new publications. At the same time, Slovenia managed to maintain and further develop its traditionally extensive network of public libraries, from which readers borrow significantly more books than they purchase in bookshops.

The positive trend continued with Slovenia's entry into the EU in 2004 and

the Schengen area in 2007, particularly in the decade 2000-2013 (160 translated works, averaging 11.5 per year), with the predominance no longer of poetry but of prose, and no longer of classics but of contemporaries; the need for dissemination and marketing exploits modern image simulacra, in particular the “phenomenon” Boris Pahor, which reached a national audience and distribution, generating a significant media and sales impact.¹

While the number of literary translations from Slovenian has increased, their reception remains quite limited. Restricting myself to the works I have translated with an afterword and others I have directly followed with the publisher, even in the presence of very positive articles in national newspapers (e.g., *Il Corriere della Sera*, *L'Avvenire*, *il Giornale*) and in prestigious literary magazines (e.g., *L'Indice dei libri del mese*), the “sales” aspect has not, in all cases, proved profitable. Italian readers still remain those whom Zoltan Jan remarked upon: “... however, interest in... Slovene literature remained largely outside their horizon” (2001: 251). Along similar lines is an assessment by Tatjana Rojc: “That the establishment of an independent Slovene state and its sovereign presence within the European community have significantly contributed to the greater knowledge and recognition of Slovenians as a national, political, and, therefore, literary entity is undeniable. However, there is still no definition or definitive recognition of this entity today” (2010: 258).² On the whole, despite the increase in both the quantity and quality of translations³ published by Italian publishers, not necessarily from the border area, with regard to “the impact these versions have had on Italian intellectual life,”⁴ one cannot ignore the fact that “Slovene literary heritage... has left very little trace in Italy, despite the obvious interest of the two neighbouring nations in getting to know each other, especially through the excellent means of mutual understanding that is literature.”⁵

¹ In the same vein, Tatjana Rojc (2010) declared: “Evropsko uveljavljanje Borisa Pahorja predstavlja v tem kontekstu fenomen zase” (In this context, Boris Pahor’s European popularity is a phenomenon in its own right. Transl. P. Raveggi).

² “Da sta ustanovitev samostojne slovenske države in njen suveren nastop znotraj evropske skupnosti bistveno pripomogli k večjemu poznavanju in priznavanju Slovencev kot narodne, politične in torej tudi literarne entitete, je neizpodbitno. Vendar definicije in definitivnega prepoznavanja te entitete danes še ni.”

³ Today the translators are mostly of Italian origin, no longer mainly Slovene as in 1983, when the collection *Saggi sulla letteratura slovena dal XVIII al XX secolo* by Marija Pirjevec appeared (Pirjevec, 1983).

⁴ “... se consideriamo l’impatto che tali versioni hanno avuto nella vita intellettuale italiana”.

⁵ “Il patrimonio letterario sloveno ... ben poca traccia ha lasciato in Italia, e ciò, nonostante l’ovvio interesse delle due nazioni vicine di conoscersi anche e soprattutto attraverso quell’eccellente mezzo di comprensione reciproca che sono le opere letterarie”. (Pirjevec, 1983: 99).

2. Slovene Literature – Activity in the Border Region and the Entire Territory

The presence of Slovene literature has been more pronounced in the border region, as emphasised by Tamara Mikolič Južnič in her well-documented essay: “The territory, which today belongs to the Province of Gorizia, Trieste, and Udine in the Italian region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, is historically of great importance for the development of Slovene national identity and the Slovenian literary language, as it was one of the cradles of the Slovene press, a centre of literary production in Slovene, and a key point of first-rate translation exchange between Slovenian and Italian, as well as between other languages and Slovenian....”⁶

Many Slovene publishing houses present in this territory were committed to promoting the quality of the Slovene culture and literature among the predominantly Italian population. “The most typical book production was (and still is) characterised by the publishing houses *Goriška Mohorjeva*, the *Goriška Matica* publishing house and, above all, the *Publishing House of the Trieste Press (ZTT)*. In the second half of the 20th century, other publishing houses emerged, such as *Mladika, Most* and *Novi Matajur*” (2023: 479).⁷

This contribution focuses on Italian publishers across the national territory. Some small and medium-sized publishing houses-among them an increasing number that choose to publish Slovene literary works even though they do not belong to the geographical border area-base their editorial line on the identification of “literary voices and experiences of the most authentic and generative modernity” (Pizzi, 2019: 146), voices that only regions traditionally perceived as peripheral⁸ are able to express and capture, as K. Pizzi puts it in her insightful essay *Triestine*

⁶ “Ozemlje, ki danes sodi v Goriško, Tržaško in Videmsko pokrajino v italijanski deželi Furlaniji – Julijski krajini, je zgodovinsko izjemnega pomena za razvoj slovenske nacionalne identitete in slovenskega knjižnega jezika, saj je bilo ena od zibelk slovenskega tiska, središče knjižne produkcije v slovenščini ter točka prevodne izmenjave na prvem mestu med slovenščino in italijanščino...”

⁷ “Najbolj značilno so knjižno produkcijo zaznamovale (nekatero jo še vedno) založbe Goriška Mohorjeva družba, Goriška matica in predvsem Založništvo tržaškega tiska (ZTT), ob teh pa so se v drugi polovici 20. stoletja pojavile še nekatere druge založbe, kot so Mladika, Most in Novi Matajur.” (Mikolič Južnič, 2023: 480).

⁸ Regarding the definition of “canonical literature” and “peripheral literature” I refer to Martina Ožbot: “... it would be necessary to determine exactly what constitutes a canonical and what a peripheral literature. For our purposes, it suffices to say that among the determining factors are the strength of the literary tradition, the political status of the language in which a given literature is written, and the number of speakers of that language, including its bi- or multilingual speakers, who are a precondition for translation to take place” (2021: 20).

Literature between Slovenia and Italy: A Case of Missed Transculturalism?

These include publishing houses such as *Safarà*, which “does not specialise in any particular linguistic area but likes to explore different genres and linguistic affiliations in order to centre the book's uniqueness at the heart of everything”.⁹ According to the director Cristina Pascotto, “readers of the Slovene work published in 2021¹⁰ were more attracted by the dystopian genre than by the author's nationality-the work is indeed the product of an emerging talent radically European in sensibility and scope, but,” she reiterates, “I believe that, at least initially, plot and genre carry greater weight”.

Another such publishing house is *Forum Udine*, which inaugurated, in 2014-the year *Zandonai Editore* closed its doors-a new “*Collana (s)confini*”. This reflected Forum's desire to move beyond its scientific-academic university origins and venture into the literary field (“to open itself up to stories told in different languages, in different times and places”),¹¹ becoming a bridge stretching towards the Slavic world. With the *Collana (s)confini*, the university and academic publishing house *Forum* resumed a dialogue with fiction from across the border, reknitting the threads of the previous *Collana OltreE*.¹² *Safarà* and *Forum* have similar profiles, as

⁹ Interview with C. Pascotto, June 2023.

¹⁰ Jasmin Frelj, *A/metà*, translated by Michele Obit, Pordenone: Safara 2021.

¹¹ Interview with the director Norma Zamparo, June 2022.

¹² Remarks on the *OltreE* series of the *Forum* publishing house, Forum's Director Norma Zamparo's response in June 2022: At the beginning of 2000, the geographical location of FVG in a border area, with the University of Udine, historically animated by a strong empathy for the Slavic world and two Departments of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, made particularly dynamic by the presence of Prof. Annamaria Cosentino (Department of Eastern European Languages and Civilisations) and Prof. Luigi Reitani (Department of Germanic and Romance Languages and Literatures), contributed to the creation of a stimulating academic environment. In this stimulating context, Forum's fruitful collaboration with the two leading figures, Annamaria Cosentino and Luigi Reitani, served as the catalyst for the creation of the *Collana OltreE*, strategically designed to include translated works by carefully chosen authors, focused on the countries of Central Europe (Austria, Hungary, the republics of former Yugoslavia). This led, in 2006, to the translation of a work by the 2018 Nobel Prize-winning Polish author Olga Tokarczuk (*Che Guevara e altri racconti*, Udine, Forum, 2006, 264 p., translation by Borys Naumow, edited by Silvano De Fanti) and in 2007, to the translation of a work by Drago Jančar (*The Hum*, Udine, Forum, 2007, 256 p., translation Roberto Dapit and Martin Vidali, edited by Roberto Dapit). In the following years, Prof. Annamaria Cosentino left Udine for Rome, and Luigi Reitani was called to other responsibilities, both in Udine (Councilor for Culture and Tourism; Director of the Interdepartmental Centre for Peace Research “Irene” at the University of Udine) and later in Berlin, as Director of the Italian Cultural Institute. The Department of Eastern European Languages and Civilisation also evolved into something else. Consequently, and primarily due to the departure of the two professors, what had been for *Forum* an experience of extraordinary and vital collaboration-of publishing operations at the highest scientific level, with intellectuals motivated by a spirit of research and first-hand knowledge of the authors-came to an end.

do *Keller* (founded in 2005; Rovereto, Trento), and *Ronzani* (Vicenza).

Much more radical, *Wojtek* (founded in 2017, Naples) opens its website with a programmatically “non-mainstream” profession of faith:¹³ “The publishing house proposes ‘non-genre’ fiction and understands this formula in an inclusive and open sense, with respect to unexplored or only partially explored environments and literatures by the Italian publishing industry, thus avoiding any mainstream approach.” This fits well with its editorial choices of intercepting “narratives capable of decoding, in full freedom of conception and realisation, what is really happening beside, behind, and beyond reassuring representations and obvious words.”

3. The Stages of the Journey: The Beginning, How It All Started

As part of the 2021 Conference *Diacritical Marks on the Cover. Central and Southeastern European Literatures between Publishing Strategies and Translation*, organized by Ca' Foscari in 2021, I chose to address the JAK (the Republic of Slovenia's Book Agency) grants for literary translations from Slovenian into Italian (Raveggi, 2022). The results, somewhat surprisingly, seemed to contradict the initial assumptions: despite the fact that most Italian publishers interviewed¹⁴ in 2020 stated that once a book has been selected for publication, the JAK grant does not influence its realization. Nevertheless, it is helpful to draw a publisher's attention to the Republic of Slovenia's Book Agency's tenders, which aim to cover at least part of the translation and printing costs when submitting a book proposal. Namely, although only five Italian publishers amongst those I interviewed stated that without the JAK grant they would not have been able to publish a work translated from Slovenian, due to the translation costs and the risk that authors being completely unknown to the Italian public might lead to a near-certain failure, most other interviewed publishers stated that the decision to publish precedes participation in the tender and does not depend on its outcome. Still, the JAK tender appears to have become a focal

¹³ <https://www.wojtekedizioni.it/casa-editrice/> (accessed 3 July 2023).

¹⁴ The research aimed to identify Italian publishers that had published Slovenian literature during a specific period. I contacted 48 publishers, of whom 29 responded.

point around which the publishers most interested in Slovenian literature and culture revolve, receiving significant attention. However, such publishers can be counted on one hand, and almost without exception, they were all initially solicited by a translator “scout”.

A question remained after the conclusion of my previous research: as the JAK Book Agency itself suspects, there may be a lack of information on the Slovenian book market and JAK tenders, which contributes to the low number of Italian publishers applying for JAK tenders, and thus the low number of subsidies granted. Considering this question as a starting point, the next step is to identify the reasons of the very few applications for JAK tenders and the subsequently low percentage of Slovenian books published in Italian with the JAK subsidy. This process will involve two parallel tracks: directly engaging with selected Italian publishers and selected Slovenian publishers.

This paper offers a qualitative analysis of their responses, including recommendations for improving the dissemination of the JAK grants. The research in this paper identifies information gaps, which I attempt to address, along with their potential causes. The paper calls for increased efforts to disseminate information about JAK's contributions and to foster better communication between Italian and Slovene literary communities.

Based on the data provided by Prof. M. Košuta's and P. Koritnik's analysis,¹⁵ I identified the Italian publishers of Slovenian literary works translated without a JAK grant for the period 2016-2022.

¹⁵ Prof. Košuta very kindly anticipated and summarized his new analysis in private correspondence, from which the following rough numerical data emerged: a total of 153 books and 31 JAK grants from 2014 to 2022. Specifically, the Italian translations of Slovene literature were as follows: 2014: 19; 2015: 15; 2016: 14; 2017: 20; 2018: 27; 2019: 15; 2020: 11; 2021: 21; 2022: 11. Prof. Košuta also suggested that I consult JAK for the results of an ongoing broad-ranging study on translations of Slovene literature into Italian. The researcher, P. Koritnik (identified to me as a JAK collaborator in a private correspondence with Mrs. Katja Urbanija, an official at the JAK Book Agency-Sector: International promotion of Slovene literature and the humanities-International cooperation and Bologna 2024) very kindly forwarded me the results for the years 2004 to 2015: 390 books over 12 years; and for 2016 to 2021: 150 works over 6 years, of which 23 were subsidised by JAK (Koritnik 2023).

4. Italian Publishers of Slovene Literature Translated without a JAK Grant

I contacted each of these publishers, as well as several figures active in both the Italian and Slovene cultural scenes.¹⁶ My questions, following an introduction that referenced the Slovene literary works in the publisher's catalogue, focused on the limited attention the Italian publishing industry pays to Slovene literary production:

Question: "What could be the reasons for the limited participation of Italian publishers in JAK tenders? What do you think are the reasons for their not participating? Are there particular obstacles, or are publishers simply unaware of the tenders?"

Valentina Scalzo, from the AEDI (Association of Independent Publishers in Italy) Secretariat, responded by thanking me and requesting details about the JAK tenders, of which they were unaware, to inform AEDI members of these opportunities. I promptly complied with the request, and AEDI assured me that detailed information on accessing the JAK Book Agency website and tenders would be distributed to all members (several hundred independent publishers).

Giuseppe Manitta of *Il Convivio Editore* replied that they had not participated in the call for tenders because unfortunately they were unaware of it, expressing regret: "It would have been a valuable opportunity to further promote our beloved writer Giovanni Ivan Tavčar." Mr. Manitta added that in the future, "if we publish something again, we will likely learn out how to access the tenders".

Roberto Capucciati of *Versante Sud* replied (10 July 2023), revealing the total lack of information about JAK calls and assuring participation in the event of future publications of Slovene literary works in Italian.

Mauro di Leo of Atmosphere Books replied (3 July 2023) that he was unaware of the JAK funds and expressed doubts about publishing more Slovene

¹⁶ The publishers and individuals who responded are those discussed in this paper. Nine Italian publishers responded out of 22, and two Slovene publishers responded out of nine. The 22 Italian publishers were selected from a pool of 51, excluding those that published self-authored works, those that had already received JAK (or other) grants, and those that published non-fiction.

authors in the future: “I would only make an exception if I could find a truly good novel for young people,” as the publishing house's efforts are focused on East Asian literature.

For *Qudulibri*, Patrizia Dughero and Simone Cuva provided a very detailed reply explaining, for each published work, the reasons for not participating in the JAK tender (one of the authors was Italian-born, some books were works of non-fiction, and others had received printing funds from the *Trubar Foundation*, which was not yet incorporated into the JAK tenders at the time). *Qudulibri* is determined to apply for the JAK tenders in both 2024 and 2025.

I wrote to *Picarona* via the site's internal contact form. They thanked me for the information, which was even more useful as they were unaware of the JAK tenders and now intend to consider them for potential future publications of Slovenian literary texts.

An interesting reply from Roberto Revello of Mimesis Publishing House (which boasts, in its catalogue, not only literary works by Slovene authors but also a dozen titles by the Slovene philosopher Slavoj Žižek). Revello, after warmly thanking me for the information on the JAK tenders, clarifies the reasons behind the solid continuity of *Mimesis Publishing's* commitment to what Slovenia has to offer in the literary, philosophical, and generally humanistic fields:

Our interest in Slovenia, beyond specific individual proposals, depends on three main factors: the fact that we have been involved in European projects for many years, which obviously facilitates exchanges with other countries, the fact that we are also rooted in Friuli, a border region, and our collaboration with Slovene university academics. We will, therefore, certainly continue to take an interest in Slovene culture. Our non-participation in the JAK tenders is essentially due to the fact that we were not aware of this support, so we will certainly take it into account.

We could actually have used it for *La stagione secca* (Gabriela Babnik, *Sušna doba*, Beletrina 2012; *La stagione secca*, Mimesis 2017), which was financed by Creative Europe. Considering that (at least for the EU) there is no incompatibility with other support, it would have been an excellent opportunity. We would certainly like to participate in the future.

5. Two Cases of their own: *Incerti editori* and *Ponte alle Grazie*

Incerti Publishers is emblematic of the fatal instability faced by small publishers (symbolised by the italicized *n* that denies any certainty in the very name of the publishing house itself). Through Giampaolo De Pietro's response to my queries, I received confirmation that two books of Slovene literature (*Istruzioni per l'uso* and *Trilogia* by Primož Čučnik) were published in 2017 thanks to JAK funding. Mr. De Pietro also described how, from the very beginning, they were motivated by a strong desire and enthusiasm for books—"especially those that perhaps no publisher would easily offer, and therefore in translation." It was a passionate project that had become increasingly *uncertain* and open-ended. "In short, we currently have no barcodes and no real publishing programme". *Incerti editori*, as a publishing house, no longer exists.

The *Ponte alle Grazie* publishing house is not only a special case, but also an encouraging one. Vincenzo Ostuni of the *Ponte alle Grazie* publishing house and Žižek's translator from English into Italian, replied to my two questions, explaining that *Ponte alle Grazie* was unaware of the JAK calls but would not have considered participating anyway, as Slavoj Žižek writes in English. Vincenzo Ostuni was keen to know whether the fact that Žižek's books were written in English would make a difference. To be on the safe side, I wrote to Mrs. Katja Urbanija, a JAK official, asking whether books written in English by Slovene authors and translated from English into Italian could participate in JAK tenders for translation costs. Mrs. Urbanija's immediate, kind, and thorough response pointed out that, from 2022 onwards, works not written in Slovenian by authors perceived as Slovene may participate in the JAK tender call for translation costs.

Mrs. Urbanija explains:

As there have been a few examples in the past of authors who are perceived as Slovene but who do not always write in Slovenian ... we thought it was important to include them in the tender for translations. Thus, it was only in 2022 that we published the first tender for translations that included works by all Slovene authors, regardless of the language in which they write. So far, we have had a handful of cases where we have supported translations from other languages.

I informed Vincenzo Ostuni of *Ponte alle Grazie* that there were already quite a few examples of such authors, whose translation into foreign language had been

supported, even though the original language was not Slovenian.

6. Writing to Selected Slovene Publishers

Meanwhile, a second question arose regarding Slovenia's genuine interest in making the Italian publishing industry more dynamic and encouraging greater interest in publishing Slovene literary works and, consequently, in receiving JAK subsidies. Therefore, I wrote to Slovene publishers whose books had been translated into Italian without participating in the JAK calls. I sent them a page outlining my current research, asking for their opinion on the statement that Italian publishers are not sufficiently attentive to Slovene literature, and encouraging them to provide concrete proposals for overcoming the current situation.¹⁷ The only two Slovene publishers to respond to the questionnaire were *Beletrina* and *Mladinska knjiga*, both of which were aware of JAK tenders and the procedures involved.

Mrs. Petra Kavčič, Head of International Cooperation at *Beletrina* publishing house, was the first to reply:

[...] For my part, here is what I have done so far: I list all calls for submissions in our various lists and always include them at the end of emails when sending out a proposal.

I regularly send out a newsletter featuring announcements of calls for submissions, as well as reminders when the submission deadlines are approaching.

For publishers with whom we have signed contracts that are not contingent on calls for proposals, I reach out when calls open to encourage them to apply.”

Moreover, Mrs. Petra Kavčič is so attentive to the importance of disseminating all news of JAK tenders and calls to the entire Italian publishing industry that she even added a request in her reply: “If there is anything else I can do, please remind me and urge me. When you are focused on one track, sometimes you fail to see others.”

The PR representative of one of the largest Slovenian publishers, Mrs. Senja Požar from *Mladinska knjiga*, pointed out in her reply that while in Austria and Germany her publishing house can rely on valid and dynamic interlocutors (SKICA: Slo-

¹⁷ See the Appendix for the questionnaire.

vene Cultural and Information Centres, a joint project of the Slovene Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, linked to the Slovenian embassies in Austria/Vienna and Germany/Berlin) through whom knowledge of funding opportunities can be effectively disseminated, nothing of the sort exists in Italy.

Here are her replies:

Question 1: What do you think of the statement that Italian publishers are not responsive enough to Slovene literature?

Italians might be more responsive as neighbours, but I can state that every year we sell more copyrights, and the trend is encouraging.

Question 2: Do you have any suggestions as to what could be done to concretely improve the situation?

In the German-speaking region, SKICA in Vienna and Berlin, along with the cultural centres of the Embassy, are very active. We also collaborate closely with the Jugendbibliothek in Munich. Through all of these, we organise numerous events aimed at improving knowledge of Slovenia and its literature. In Italy, however, there is nothing comparable.

In Italy, there are six Slovene Consulates, one Embassy, and as many lectorates at the five universities where Slovenian language and literature are taught (Padua, Trieste, Udine, Naples and Rome). The Embassy and the Consulates, along with the lecturers and professors, strive to the best of their abilities, and often beyond, to organize cultural events, literary presentations and much more. However, they are few in number and operate on a voluntary basis or with minimal funds. Slovene cultural operators in Austria and Germany are numerous and enjoy substantial funding. Might this, then, be a political choice rather than merely a matter of commercial convenience?

7. Key Figures in the Cultural Scene in Italy and Slovenia (e.g., Marko Kravos)

Poet, writer and former Slovene-Italian publisher Marko Kravos provided a broad reflection with numerous suggestions of concrete utility aimed at ensuring the continuous, timely, proactive, and never merely episodic involvement of

all actors in the book production chain in the Republic of Slovenia. This would begin with the State Agency JAK, which would scout translators, journalists, and possibly university experts, all with the unconditional and committed support of Slovene publishing houses. Marko Kravos also proposes that the promoters of Slovenian-Italian book exchanges convene every three years to meet in person, exchange views, and identify new synergies. Above all, he stresses the importance of:

... showcasing Slovenia's interest in promoting its literary presence in a unique, boutique manner, in line with the trend toward sustainable, i.e., ecologically conscious, literary "cuisine."

Marko Kravos also put forward a proposal:

It would be extremely beneficial if the annual Slovenian Book Fair in Ljubljana included a showcase of all recent foreign-language editions of Slovenian books, while also organising an event—a meeting between authors, translators, publishers, and promoters.

Giampaolo Borghello, Professor Emeritus of Italian Literature and former Director of the Department of Italianistics at the University of Udine, regards the issue as delicate but not irresolvable, with the likely cause being the unfamiliarity of Italian publishing houses with the calls for tenders and the various activities of JAK. His suggestion is to maximise the dissemination of relevant information to as many publishing houses as possible by notifying their press and legal offices.

Pier Luigi Franco, a professional journalist and writer, believes that there are no significant obstacles or other reasons for the limited participation in the JAK tenders. Like Prof. Borghello, he also attributes this to a lack of information among Italian publishers, whose structural and organisational difficulties are well known to him. He considers it

unsurprising (that) they let calls and opportunities slip through their fingers. Unfortunately, especially for smaller publishing houses, the shortage of personnel often results in an accumulation of administrative and dissemination work, which I believe is at the root of this issue.

8. Evidence of a Positive Trend in the Sector

As of 2021, the JAK tenders to cover the costs of translation have been expanded and diversified. In addition to the tenders for German-language publishers only, which were introduced in 2017 and provided 11 grants in 2023, with an average of EUR 6,182 per grant, and the usual tenders for publishers from all countries, two variants have been added: the “all-inclusive” tenders¹⁸ and the EU Call for translation and publication of books by Slovene authors in foreign languages, exclusively for the Cohesion Region Eastern Slovenia.¹⁹ Furthermore, JAK and the Department of Translation Studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana are carrying out cognitive projects focusing on translations from Slovenian into Italian, such as the aforementioned database prepared by P. Koritnik at JAK and an extensive research project currently underway at the Department of Translation Studies. Private correspondence with a young researcher from the same department reveals that she and her colleagues are conducting extensive research on the translation of Slovene literature into foreign languages, including Italian. They are collecting evidence on the transmission of Slovene literature in Italy (i.e., in the field of literary translations). The aim of the entire project is to gain a better understanding of the current state of the reception of Slovene authors in Italy.

In addition, translators into Italian are now granted much more attractive scholarships and study residencies than, to my knowledge, ever before (Jan, 2001).

¹⁸ JR4-FRANKFURT-P-2022, first and second deadlines-Call for translations of Slovenian authors into foreign languages, all-inclusive with a fixed amount of 5348 euro-saw one application for translation into ITA in the first deadline and three in the second deadline.

¹⁹ JR10-FRANKFURT-P-2023.

9. Conclusion

The dissemination of information about JAK's translation tenders throughout the Italian publishing scene appears to be crucial for encouraging the publication of Slovenian literary texts in Italy. The research indicates a slow but steady increase in the translation of Slovenian literature into Italian following Slovenia's independence and entry into the EU. The data also reveal that Italian publishers' participation in JAK tenders for translation grants remains relatively low, potentially due to limited awareness or information about these opportunities.

Furthermore, several publishers in Italy have expressed a lack of knowledge regarding JAK tenders, indicating a need for improved communication and awareness-building efforts. The responses from Italian publishers and cultural personalities suggest that there is potential interest and willingness to participate in JAK tenders, provided the information is effectively disseminated.

The results from this paper are likely understated, as I could not identify any Italian publishers who did not publish Slovene works but would have done so had they been aware of the grants. The lack of information regarding the JAK grants is therefore likely to have a more widespread and pronounced impact.

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of addressing the lack of useful information in Italy regarding JAK's supports and subsidies and emphasizes the significance of countermeasures being taken within the Slovene cultural landscape to improve collaboration and encourage greater participation from Italian publishers. The reported increase in attention from Slovene academic institutions and publishers towards Italian-translated books further underscores the potential for growth in this area.

Overall, the research underscores the need for enhanced efforts to disseminate information about JAK's contributions to translation and to foster greater collaboration between Italian and Slovene literary communities.

The survey confirmed my long-standing suspicion of a lack of useful information in Italy regarding the numerous supports and subsidies that the Republic of Slovenia generously provides to many foreign countries in order to internationalise its cultural production. However, Slovene institutions are taking countermeasures in a general trend of increasing attention. There is now an upwards trend in the sale of copyrights for Slovenian works to Italian publishers, as reported by Slovene publishers.

This research project, by contacting publishers and inquiring about JAK's grants, contributed to the dissemination of information on JAK's contributions to translation.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire sent to Slovene Publishers

Dear Publisher,

I have been conducting research over the past few years, initially sparked by the conference “Minor Literatures in the Italian Publishing and Cultural Context,” organised in 2020 by the University Ca' Foscari in Venice. This research has continued in 2023, prompted by the conference “Translations and Transnational Exchanges,” organised by the University of Zadar in September 2023. The research suggests that one of the main reasons for the low participation of Italian publishers in the JAK/SBA translation calls is their lack of awareness of these opportunities.

There is an increasing number of Italian publishers, although not geographically close to Slovenia, who have become familiar with Slovene literature and appreciate its high level of innovation and creativity. However, there are still too few of them to really be able to talk about the dissemination and penetration of Slovene literature into the Italian cultural space.

I wonder whether raising awareness of these translation calls could play a more significant role in supporting quality publishers, particularly those who are unable to market ‘niche’ works by authors unknown to the Italian public, especially when the translations involve higher costs.

I am confident that your publishing house will continue to seek new contacts and strengthen existing ones in this area.

I wonder whether you might be planning to expand your knowledge of this field, especially in light of Slovenia's role as the guest of honour at next year's Bologna Book Fair?

Unfortunately, no European funding has been allocated for this important event, which means that activities and incentives from the Slovenian side will be on a smaller scale compared to those for the Frankfurt 2023 Book Fair.

In conclusion, I would greatly appreciate your answers to the following two questions:

What are your thoughts on the claim that the Italian publishing industry is not responding sufficiently to Slovenian literature?

Do you have any suggestions as to what could be done to improve the situation in **concrete** terms?

Résumé

Cet article explore l'importance de la diffusion d'informations sur les appels à candidatures pour la subvention des traductions par l'Agence du livre de la République slovène (JAK) au sein de la scène éditoriale italienne afin de favoriser la publication de textes littéraires slovènes par des éditeurs italiens. S'appuyant sur les analyses des traductions de la littérature slovène vers l'italien par le professeur M. Košuta et P. Koritnik et sur les entretiens avec des éditeurs italiens et slovènes, la présente étude confirme une augmentation lente mais régulière des traductions depuis l'indépendance de la Slovénie. Malgré cela, la participation des éditeurs italiens aux appels à candidatures lancés par la JAK reste faible, probablement en raison d'une sensibilisation limitée. Les éditeurs et agents culturels soulignent la nécessité d'augmenter les efforts de communication et de sensibilisation. L'étude souligne l'importance de remédier au manque d'informations en Italie sur les subventions de la JAK, tout en soulignant le potentiel de croissance dans la collaboration entre les communautés littéraires italiennes et slovènes.

MOTS CLÉS : littérature slovène, éditeurs italiens et slovènes, subventions des traductions par la JAK, diffusion d'informations

Summary

This paper explores the importance of disseminating information regarding Slovenia's Book Agency (JAK) translation tenders within the Italian publishing scene, in order to encourage the publication of Slovene literary texts by Italian publishers. Drawing on analyses of Slovene literature translations into Italian by Prof. M. Košuta and P. Koritnik, as well as insights from interviews with Italian and Slovene publishers, the study confirms a slow but steady increase in translations since Slovenia's independence. Despite this, participation by Italian publishers in JAK tenders remains low, likely due to a lack of awareness. Feedback from publishers and cultural figures underscore the necessity for improved communication and awareness-building efforts. The study highlights the importance of addressing the lack of information about JAK's subsidies in Italy and emphasizes the potential for greater collaboration between Italian and Slovene literary communities.

KEYWORDS: Slovenian literature, Italian and Slovene publishers, JAK translation grants, dissemination of information